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Education
April 17, 2008

*The following statement was issued by the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. It was also read in the House of Assembly:*

**Physical Education Purchase Program**

In recent years great progress has been made in improving our physical education programming in schools throughout the province. Today I would like to update my honourable colleagues on the Provincial Government's three-year, $3.2 million initiative which is resulting in a renewed focus and interest in physical education for students of all ages.

This year the initiative is focused on the primary and elementary grades, with $800,000 allocated for the purchase of items such as dance machines, outdoor equipment, balls and bean bags, and other equipment designed for smaller children.

Students and teachers in the intermediate and high school levels will already be familiar with the new state-of-the-art equipment resulting from this initiative. Every public high school has received at least $4,000 worth of equipment such as aerobic machines, spinner bikes and commercial rowers. There's also outdoor equipment such as snow shoes, cross-country skis and GPS units.

This funding supports a shift in programming that now focuses on activities that appeal to more students. It includes a range of activities such as rowing, in addition to the more common sporting activities like basketball or volleyball. This in turn contributes to young people leading more active, healthy lives.

The Provincial Government is committed to a comprehensive health and physical education program in our schools. In addition to a new physical education program, we have introduced healthy food guidelines, and this year $800,000 has been allocated for the improvement of school cafeterias.

Funding to improve the health of our young people will provide long-term benefits for our students' overall health and physical fitness. We will continue to support steps that encourage our youth to become more physically active and to lead active, healthy, productive lives.

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